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1. INTRODUCTION:

The origin of the word "toy" is unknown, but it is believed that it was first used in the 14th century. [1] Toy is an object for a child to play with, typically a model or miniature replica of something. Toys play an important role in the overall growth and development of a child. In the urban environment where children live in nuclear families, toys have become increasingly important to shape the behaviour of children.

When children play, their actions are motivated mainly by intrinsic motivation, positive effect, non-literality, and process orientation. Studies have shown that gender differences in play styles appear between 10 to 14 months and are well established by the time the child reaches to the age of 36 months (Fagot, 1988).

By the time children enter school, the usually established that gender identities and develop stereotypes of how gender is different. Especially for boys, the entire process becomes even more gender oriented in middle childhood (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995)[2]. Children certainly have very limited opportunity to select their own environments in which they play. They get a very limited choice to select their playmates and activities as these activities are mainly guided by the parents and guardians to take care of the child. It seems to be the case that majority of the buyers express disapproval of gender inconsistent play behaviour or toys. Parents, knowingly or unknowingly exert a strong influence on the toy preferences of children by introducing them or providing them with gender-typed toys.

After extensive research, researchers have found that differences in play styles, as a function of gender have remained majorly consistent. Girls would be expected to play with toys such as dolls, dress up games, artwork, kitchen playsets. On the contrary boys would be expected to play with products, cars, guns, carpentry kits, electronic kits et cetera. Studies have also shown that boys engaged in more aggressive behaviour and play in larger groups whereas girls spend more time in smaller groups and prefer activities that are passive and nature (Fagot, 1988)[3]. The current study probes into the various factors that determine the buying behaviour of the parents towards toys. However, the research lays special emphasis on the aspect of gender neutrality in toys.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

First and foremost, majority of the parents seem to fail to realize that the idea of Gender is an identity and is not based on someone's biological sex. That's why researchers believe that some dolls can better reflect how children see themselves. In September 2019, Mattel, one of the toy manufacturing giants, announced a new line of gender-neutral dolls that do not identify as either a girl or boy.[4] Gender-neutral dolls offer much-needed variety in kids' toys, but children – as well as adults – also need to learn more tolerance of how others express gender differently than they do. And boys in particular need support in appreciating and practicing more traditional feminine traits, like communicating emotion or caring for someone else – skills that are required for any healthy relationship. According to a recent study roughly 45% of women said they expected to experience sexual violence just because they are women; whereas none of the men reported a fear of sexual violence and 35% said their manhood meant they should expect pleasure. These findings can be linked back to the kinds of toys we play with. Girls are taught to be passive and strive for beauty by playing with princesses and putting on makeup. Boys are encouraged to be more active or even aggressive with trucks, toys guns and action figures; building, fighting and even dominating are emphasized. A recent analysis of Lego sets demonstrates this dichotomy in what they emphasize for boys – building expertise and skilled professions – compared with girls – caring for others, socializing and being pretty. Thus, girls spend their childhoods practicing how to be pretty and care for another person, while boys practice getting what they want. This attitude needs to change, especially in the Indian context. In India, the year 2019 saw over 4 lakh reported cases of crimes committed against women, up from 3.78 lakh in 2018 and 3.59 lakh cases in 2017.[5] The NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) reported 32,033 rape cases which translates to a shocking 88 rape cases a day, and this is just 10% of all crimes against women. The researcher, in no way wants to suggest that such crimes happen only due to toys, but certainly wants to emphasize that such criminals are made due to faulty parenting, in majority of the cases. As mentioned earlier, the toys that parents chose for their children are an important aspect of parenting and the overall development of the child.

Parents not only infer certain characteristics based on their children's assumed gender identity but also interact differently with their male and female infants. For example, the quality of parents' play with their male infants and toddlers has been observed as highly physical in nature

(e.g., rough and tumble play) (Lindsey and Mize 2000),[6] whereas parents' play with their female infants and toddlers tends to be gentle and involve pretend play that is female gender-role oriented (e.g., playing house) (Lindsey and Mize 2000). Furthermore, observational research demonstrates that when parents are with their infants in playrooms with gender-typed toys, parents, especially fathers, are more likely to choose gender-typical toys for their infants and respond positively to their child playing with gender-typical toys (Fagot and Hagan 1991)[7].

These forms of parental interactions, whether consciously or unconsciously guided, reinforce a strict gender binary, placing certain characteristics at extreme ends of a perceived continuum of feminine to masculine (Lytton and Romney 1991). Studies have also shown that in majority of the cases, parents' explicit, short-term socialization attempts (i.e., encouragement to play with a type of toy) influence infants' and toddlers' gender-typed toy preferences, leaving them with little or no choice to choose their natural identity.

The current research addresses the following research questions:

- What is the role of gender neutrality in decision making towards buying toys?
- What are the different societal, normative, and other factors that influence the gender preferences of the parents when they make buying decisions regarding toys?
- What are the current trends in the buying behaviour towards gender neutral toys?
- Do factors like societal pressures, normative gender role attitudes and the level of gender socialization in children had an influence on the buying intention towards the buying behaviour for toys?
- Which strategies can be adopted to bring about a favorable change in the buying behaviour towards gender neutral toys?
- Do the scores of the gender role attitudes have any correlation with the buying behaviour of toys?

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Muthuraman, Subrahmanian & Chandrasekaran, S & Thiagarajan, Thiruvenkadam (2015)[8] performed a study entitled **"Shoppers buying behaviour towards children's toys".** According to the authors, who conducted a study covers the state of Tamil Nadu, price and quality are the major factor that influences their buying behaviour. The authors have studied different categories of toys and performed a descriptive study by conducting a survey of 125 buyers.

Kaur and Singh (2019)[9] in their study stated that teenagers attempted to have the products that other consumers are possessing and remain under the composition of their peers to buy certain electronic goods like computers, games, and different kinds of gadgets. Various factors affect the children's purchase requests that are made to their parents. The authors have observed that the children's movements or behaviour, gender, level of income of the parent, the product's visibility, the stage of the development of the child, the suitability of the toy, and the strategy used in the child's request play an important role that affect the buying behaviour of the parents.

Murnen (2018)[10] in his study notes that the overall research on the impact of gender typed or gender specific toys and play on children's social behaviour is very limited. However, Lee and Wong (2016) know that girls who play with mostly feminine toys and boys who play with neutral toys are more skilled have developing strategies to comfort crying infants than their peers who play with toys that are masculine in nature.

Researchers have found out that toys can be predictors of the prosocial behaviour of **boys (Coyne et. al. 2016).** Gender-typed play behaviors are prominent in early childhood and can lead to gender differentiated skills and behavior throughout life. Reducing children's gender stereotypes may promote gender diversity in their play and thus reduce this gender differentiation. Continuous efforts have been taken to reduce gender stereotypes of toys and play by reducing the use of gender as a category, explicitly explaining and refuting gender stereotypes, and increasing the complexity of gender categories by depicting gender diversity in children's play behaviors. [11]

Auster, C. J., & Mansbach, C. S. (2012)[12] performed a study entitled "The Gender Marketing of Toys: An Analysis of Color and Type of Toy on the Disney Store Website". The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the gender marketing of toys on the Internet replicates

findings of previous studies of the gendering of toys, and the extent to which toys for “both boys and girls”, a previously overlooked category of toys, share characteristics, such as color and type of toy, with toys marketed for “boys only” or for “girls only”. The sample consisted of the 410 toys listed for boys and the 208 toys listed for girls, including 91 toys that appeared on both lists, on the English language U.S. Disney Store website. The marketing of toys on the Disney Store website is important not only because of the growth in e-commerce, but also because of this company’s global domination of the children’s entertainment industry. Tabular analysis and chi-square revealed that bold colored toys, predominantly red, black, brown, or gray toys, and those that were action figures, building toys, weapons, or small vehicles typified toys for “boys only” on this U.S. website. Pastel colored toys, predominantly pink or purple toys, and those that were dolls, beauty, cosmetics, jewelry, or domestic-oriented typified toys for “girls only”. Most toys for “both boys and girls” were mostly “gender-neutral” in type, but they resembled toys for “boys only” in terms of their color palette, presumably to appeal to boys, who are less likely to cross gender lines than girls.

Blakemore & Centers (2005) performed 2 studies entitled "**Characteristics of Boys' and Girls' Toys**". In the first part of the study 292 undergraduates were asked to rate 126 toys as to whether they were suitable for boys, girls, or both. From these ratings, we established five categories of toys: strongly masculine, moderately masculine, neutral, moderately feminine, and strongly feminine. Using these categories, the authors constructed four toy sets; each consisted of 15 toys, three from each category. In the second part of the study, 706 undergraduates individually rated the toys from one of the toys sets on 26 scales that measured the toys' characteristics. It was found by the researchers that girls' toys were associated with physical attractiveness, nurturance, and domestic skill, whereas boys' toys were rated as violent, competitive, exciting, and somewhat dangerous. The toys rated as most likely to be educational and to develop children's physical, cognitive, artistic, and other skills were typically rated as neutral or moderately masculine. The study concluded that strongly gender-typed toys appear to be less supportive of optimal development than neutral or moderately gender-typed toys.[13]

Auster and Mansbach (2012)[14] performed a study entitled **"The Gender Marketing of Toys: An Analysis of Color and Type of Toy on the Disney Store Website".** The purpose of this study was to examine 1) the extent to which the gender marketing of toys on the Internet replicates

findings of previous studies of the gendering of toys, and 2) the extent to which toys for "both boys and girls", a previously overlooked category of toys, share characteristics, such as color and type of toy, with toys marketed for "boys only" or for "girls only". The sample consisted of the 410 toys listed for boys and the 208 toys listed for girls, including 91 toys that appeared on both lists, on the English language U.S. Disney Store website. The marketing of toys on the Disney Store website is important not only because of the growth in e-commerce, but also because of this company's global domination of the children's entertainment industry. Tabular analysis and chi-square revealed that bold colored toys, predominantly red, black, brown, or gray toys, and those that were action figures, building toys, weapons, or small vehicles typified toys for "boys only" on this U.S. website. Pastel colored toys, predominantly pink or purple toys, and those that were dolls, beauty, cosmetics, jewelry, or domestic-oriented typified toys for "girls only". Most toys for "both boys and girls" were mostly "gender-neutral" in type, but they resembled toys for "boys only" in terms of their color palette, presumably to appeal to boys, who are less likely to cross gender lines than girls. The potential impact of the gendering of toys on individuals as well as limitations of this research and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Kollmayer et.al. (2018) [15] performed a study entitled "**Parents' Judgments about the Desirability of Toys for Their Children: Associations with Gender Role Attitudes, Gender-typing of Toys, and Demographics".** The study revealed that parental toy selection and responses to toy play are important factors in children's gender socialization. Reinforcing play with same-gender-typed toys guides children's activities and limits their action repertoires in accordance with gender stereotypes. A survey of 324 Austrian parents of three- to six-year-old children was conducted to investigate parents' judgments about the desirability of different types of toys for their children and how these judgements relate to parents' gender-typing of toys, gender role attitudes, and demographics (age, education, gender). Results show that parents rated same-gender-typed and gender-neutral toys as more desirable for their children than cross-gender-typed toys. The traditionalism of parents' gender role attitudes was not associated with their desirability judgments of same-gender-typed toys but was negatively related to their desirability judgments of cross-gender-typed toys. This indicates that egalitarian parents permit a greater range of interests and behaviors in their children than traditional parents do. Younger parents, parents with lower educational levels, and fathers reported more traditional gender role attitudes than did older parents, parents with higher educational levels, and mothers. However, no differences based on

age, educational level or gender were found in parents' judgments of toy desirability. The present study demonstrates that parents' judgments about the desirability of toys for their children do not accurately reflect their gender role attitudes. This finding highlights the importance of simultaneously investigating different aspects of parents' gender-related attitudes to gain a better understanding of parental transmission of gender stereotypes.

Bainbridge, J. (2018)[16] in her article entitled **"Beyond pink and blue: The quiet rise of gender-neutral toys."** discusses the blurring of gender lines around toys and suggests that it is emblematic of a broader societal shift driven by ideas of inclusiveness, metrosexuality, genderless athletic wear, and the rise of celebrities like Caitlyn Jenner who challenge fixed gender identities. While girls' and boys' manufacturing divisions continue to exist in larger toy companies, most manufacturers would now prefer to talk about play patterns rather than gender. The global rise of Lego, the world's number one toymaker, has demonstrated the importance of the traditional pink and blue toy aisles from a marketing perspective. It has long dominated the blue boys'aisle as a construction toy and targeted the girls' aisle with its successful 2012 Lego Friends line, characterized by pink and purple blocks. Lego also licensed brands such as Star Wars, Marvel and DC Superheroes and developed more diverse ranges of products such as board games, computer games, DVDs, and accessories.

Rommes et.al. (2011)[17] have analyzed the gender scripts of the toys of three Dutch companies and distinguished gender specific from gender stereotypical scripts. The authors developed a method for rating games on these two dimensions. Gender stereotypical games play an important part in the gendering of children. To explore to what extent this might also be the case for gender specific scripts, eight girls (9-13 years old) about their play behaviour in relation to masculine connoted games were interviewed. On the one hand, these girls felt free to play with such games, but on the other hand, they also spent time and effort justifying their choices, showing that their freedom to play with gender specific games with a masculine connotation was limited to some extent. Therefore, it is important that companies develop gender neutral, gender equal or gender bending games. In this respect, our analysis of the games developed by the three companies revealed considerable differences between the companies. We explored potential reasons for these differences in the markets (educational or retail trade) addressed by these companies, the user representation techniques they had used, and the (feminist) values that the directors of these

companies held. The authors expect that interventions in the design process aimed at the user representation techniques used by the companies and the feminist values of the designers could be most effective in creating less gender specific and stereotypical games.

RESEARCH GAP:

1. Several researchers have studied the buying behaviour of the shoppers towards the toys that are purchased for children. However, not enough emphasis has been laid upon the aspect of gender neutrality in toys. Researchers have considered electronic goods like games, computers in different kinds of gadgets. They have attempted to find out the impact of income levels, behaviour, gender, product visibility on the buying behaviour of the parents. The study is a very limited in scope as they do not cover a new class of gender-neutral toys. The current study covers specifically the gender-neutral toys and the buying behaviour towards such toys.
2. Researchers have attempted to find out the impact of gender specific price on the social behaviour of children. Researchers have also drawn conclusions that toys can be predictors of prosocial behaviour of boys. However, there is very less research that analyses the impact of societal pressures, normative gender role attitudes and the level of gender socialization in children and influence of these factors on the buying intention towards the buying behaviour for gender neutral toys.
3. Number of studies have been performed but most of them are not pragmatic in nature. Studies are merely analyzing the situation and identified the problems but there is lack of research that provides strategies which can be adopted to bring about a favourable change in the buying behaviour towards gender neutral toys.
4. Overall, in the Indian context, there is lack of specific research that identifies the impact of gender role attitudes on the buying behaviour of toys.
5. Most of the research that is performed in similar areas is dependent on secondary data. The current study uses primary data and promises reliable results.

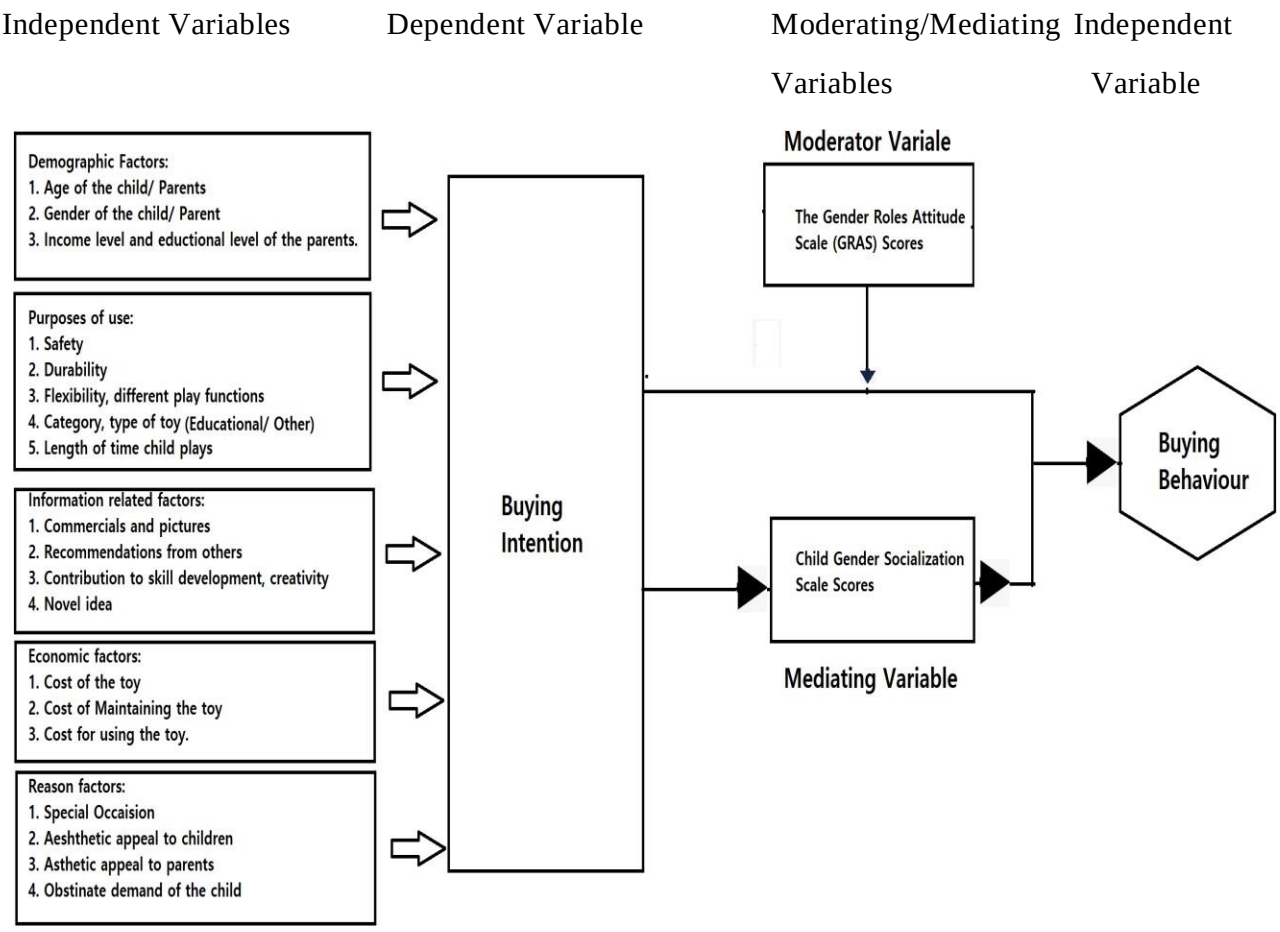
Thus, the overall review of literature suggests that there is not enough work done in the same area in the Indian context. Indian culture is diverse and probable more conservative as compared to the western culture. This underlines the significance of the study.

4. THEORITICAL CONSTRUCT:

A construct refers to a concept or characteristic that can't be directly observed but can be measured by observing other indicators that are associated with it.

Constructs can be characteristics of individuals, such as intelligence, obesity, job satisfaction, or depression; they can also be broader concepts applied to organizations or social groups, such as gender equality, corporate social responsibility, or freedom of speech.

The following diagram explains the constructs, dependent and independent variables that have been considered for the purpose of the study.


Independent Variables
Dependent Variable
Moderating/Mediating Variables
Independent Variable
Demographic Factors:
1. Age of the child/ Parents
2. Gender of the child/ Parent
3. Income level and eductional level of the parents.
Purposes of use:
1. Safety
2. Durability
3. Flexibility, different play functions
4. Category, type of toy (Educational/ Other)
5. Length of time child plays
Information related factors:
1. Commercials and pictures
2. Recommendations from others
3. Contribution to skill development, creativity
4. Novel idea
Economic factors:
1. Cost of the toy
2. Cost of Maintaining the toy
3. Cost for using the toy.
Reason factors:
1. Special Occaision
2. Aeshthetic appeal to children
3. Asthetic appeal to parents
4. Obstinate demand of the child
Buying Intention
Moderator Variale
The Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) Scores
Child Gender Socialization Scale Scores
Mediating Variable
Buying Behaviour

INDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES

1. Independent Variables

a. For the research, several independent variables were identified. The list of variables that are independent begins with the demographic factors. The age of the child and the parents who make the decision to purchase a particular toy, the gender of the child and the parent and most importantly the level of income and educational level of the parents have been considered under the demographic factors. This is because, parents who are educated may buy toys that have educational value. Affordability of a particular toy also plays an important role in the final buying behaviour.

b. The next set of independent variables was the purpose for which the toy is purchased and the various factors such as durability, flexibility, safety, category, and the length of the time the child is expected to spend with a particular toy.

c. As soon as a new toy is purchased for the child, it may forget the old toy and continue to play with the newer ones. Therefore, the amount of time that is spent by the child or is expected to be spent by the child on a particular toy also seems to contribute to the buying intention.

d. Various television commercials and display ads in shops located in marketplaces also play an important role in contributing to the buying intention. At times, family members and friends make certain recommendations of which toys should be bought for the child. At the same time, every parent wants their child to develop certain skills and be creative. Therefore, toys that are noble and contribute to the skill development of creativity of the child are more preferred by the parents.

e. The cost of the toy for the cost of maintaining the toy cannot be ignored. No matter how good the toys, the parents must be able to afford it. There is also effort and cost involved in using the toy which contributes to whether a particular person will have an intention of buying a specific type of toy.

f. Toys are purchased on special occasions. However, some toys are purchased only because they have an aesthetic appeal to the child or the parents. At times, children make obstinate demands and are stubborn about buying a particular toy. These can be other factors that contribute to the buying intention.

2. Dependent Variables:

a. As far as the dependent variables are concerned, buying intentions, and buying behaviour were the two dependent variables that were considered for the purpose of the study.

3. Mediating and Moderating Variables:

a. The level of gender socialization it will be measured with the help of a scheme that has been specifically designed, is expected to act as a mediating variable between buying intention and buying behaviour.

b. The gender role attitudes scale score is expected to moderate the relationship between the buying intention and buying behaviour. However, results may vary as a research progresses towards its end.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the role of gender neutrality in decision making towards buying toys.

2. To understand trends in the buying behavior towards Gender Neutral toys.

3. To determine the Societal, Normative, and other factors that influence the gender preferences of the parents when they buy toys.

4. To analyze the impact of the impact of Societal pressures, Normative Gender Role Attitudes, and the Level of Gender socialization in Children on the buying intention towards buying behaviour for toys.

5. To examine the impact of Societal pressures, Normative Gender Role Attitudes, and the Level of Gender socialization in Children on the buying intention towards gender neutral toys.

6. To develop strategies that would bring about a change in buying behaviour towards gender neutral toys.

7. To identify the impact of Gender Role Attitude scores on the buying behaviour of toys.

6. HYPOTHEIS:

H1. Safety and Age appropriateness have a maximum influence on the buying behaviour of all toys.

Ho: Safety and Age appropriateness have no influence on the buying behaviour of all toys.

Ha: Safety and Age appropriateness have a maximum influence on the buying behaviour of all toys.

H2: Buyers who have a gender specific attitude towards toys do not prefer buying toys that are gender neutral.

Ho: Buyers who have a gender specific attitude towards toys prefer buying toys that are gender neutral.

Ha: Buyers who have a gender specific attitude towards toys do not prefer buying toys that are gender neutral.

H3: Advertisement and marketing content used by Indian toy manufacturers is highly gender specific.

Ho: Advertisement and marketing content used by Indian toy manufacturers is not highly gender specific.

Ha: Advertisement and marketing content used by Indian toy manufacturers is highly gender specific.

H4: Individuals who have higher Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) scores tend to buy more gender specific toys.

Ho: Individuals who have higher Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) scores do not buy more gender specific toys.

Ha: Individuals who have higher Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) scores tend to buy more gender specific toys.

7. RESEARCH METHODLOGY

The proposed research is descriptive and exploratory. It is descriptive as it described the role of gender neutrality and the various factors that influence the buying behavior. At the same time, the research proposed to perform an in-dept review of literature surrounding the research problem. The study uses informal qualitative approaches in gathering data (by conducting interviews and collecting data though structured questionnaires). The research aims to clarify the exact nature of the problem to be solved. This makes the study exploratory in nature.

7.1. Data Collection:

The data would comprise of primary and secondary data.

a. Primary data would be collected using interviews, questionnaires, and observation methods.
b. Secondary data would be collected from Books, online databased of research papers such as Scopus referred journals.

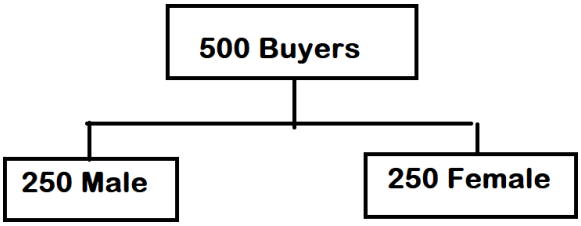
7.2. Sampling and sample design.

7.2.1. Population: The population for the study would be the Generation X consumers who purchase toys. Generation X people include those persons who were born from 1965 to early 1980s. The population of such persons is huge and unknown. However, the population is finite.

7.2.2. Sample Size: At a confidence interval of 5 and a confidence level of 95%, for a huge unknown population, the proposed sample size is 384. The researcher has proposed to consider a sample size of 500+ buyers, with equal number of male and female buyers. The researcher would consider a sample at least 100 Television Advertisements/ Printed Marketing Material (Display Boards, Brochures, Newspaper Advertisements) related to toys to analyze the type of content to find out whether the advertisement and marketing content used by Indian toy manufacturers is highly gender specific.

Sampling Technique: Convenience and Quota sampling technique would be followed. Quota sampling method is a **non-probability sampling,** and it can be defined as a sampling method of gathering representative data from a group. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand. The combination of the above methods will ensure that the data is collected from an equal number of male and female respondents. The sampling design is proposed to be as follows:

Fig 7.2.2. Sampling Design



A structured sheet that records systematic observations with regards to the content of the advertisement and marketing material shall be used to for the same.

The data will be collected by using Likert based questionnaires. To study the factors that influence the purchase intention and the buying behaviour, the researcher would refer to the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour. The theories would guide the researcher to build a model that explains the entire framework and examines the different factors that influence the buying behaviour of individuals towards toys.

To measure the gender role attitudes, the researcher would use the Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS). The researcher proposes to use Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and AMOS to perform various statistical analysis which includes structural equation modelling, factor analysis (dimensional reduction) and path analysis. The tables and graphs would be generated using Microsoft Excel and statistical package for social sciences. Linear regression analysis would be performed to test the results that have been acquired through the model.

7.3. Statistical Techniques used:

1. The Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) would check separately by the researcher using the Cronbach's Alpha and other measures of reliability and validity.
2. The same reliability and validity measures would be used to check the internal consistency of the questionnaires and the data collection tools.
3. Since the researcher predicts that all the independent variables that have been considered for the purpose of the study have an impact on the dependent variable, the researcher would use techniques like Structural Equation Modelling, Multiple Regression, ANOVA,

CFA/EFA to test the hypothesis and results. This would be done to identify the influence of all the independent variables under the study on the buying behavior.

8. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

- Indian Toys Industry is estimated to be $1.5 billion making up 0.5% global market share. The toy manufacturers in India are mostly located in NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and clusters across central Indian states.
- The sector is fragmented with 90% of the market being unorganized and 4,000 toy industry units from MSME sector. The toys industry in India has the potential to grow to $2 -3 bn by 2024. The Indian toy industry is only 0.5% of the global industry size indicating a large potential growth opportunity.
- The domestic toy demand forecasted to grow at 10-15% against the global average of 5%. There will be a 2.5x increase in income per capita from 2016 to 2027. There will be a 1.2x increase in the proportion of affluent and elite consumers in Tier 2 & Tier 3 cities by 2025. It is expected that 80% of the population will belong to Gen 'I' by 2027. [18]

9. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

It is often observed that parents make choices for their children, especially when children are very young. Relatives, family and friends are also major categories that buy toys for their near and dear ones. Toys contribute to a great extent to the development of the child. This is evident from the literature review that is presented in the earlier section of this proposal. Studies have also shown that gender neutral toys help in overall development of the children. In our study we will concentrate more on the children who are in the age group from 2 to 10 yrs old.

Studies have also shown that children who play with gender neutral toys have exhibited more skills and a better social attitude. However, not all who buy toys for children understand the importance of gender-neutral toys. This study is very important as it is pragmatic in nature. It does not only explore or describe the area of gender-neutral toys but also proposes to give suggestions that will be useful to the public. There are several societal, normative, and other factors that can have an influence on the gender preferences of the parents when they make buying decisions for the toys.

During the study the relationship between the societal and normative factors with the buying decisions will be clearly established. This will help manufacturers of toys to understand which different factors have an impact on the buying decision of the parents regarding toys. The suggestions that are the result of the study are expected to help the manufacturers to adjust their current marketing and promotional efforts in a way that is suitable for the purpose of achieving maximum growth in terms of sales. The toy manufacturers would also understand the latest trends in the buying behaviour towards gender neutral toys. This will encourage the toy manufacturers to make, gender neutral toys and match the current trend and survive in the competition.

If most of the children would be forced to adhere to their parents' encouragement and reinforcement of play with a particular type of toy, they would miss the opportunities of the advantages associated with Gender Neutral toys. The use of manipulative and forceful methods that are implemented by parents to choose and play with certain toys can prove to be detrimental to the overall development of children. Although at first glance toy preferences may appear benign, these early gender-typed preferences set the tone for lifelong messages about appropriate play behaviors and are predictive of later parental socialization practices. There is a need for the parents to understand the nature and importance of gender-neutral toys for the appropriate development of the child. To help children and families achieve optimal development, socialization practices need to change, starting in infancy. This can happen only by practicing appropriate buying behaviour related to toys. Very limited research that targets the buying behaviour of parents towards toys in India is done. Again, research that lays special emphasis on gender neutrality of the toys is very limited in India. The current study probes into the various aspects that contribute to the buying behaviour of the parents and lays special emphasis on the aspect of gender preferences in toys.

The current study also evaluates the gender role attitudes by using the gender role attitudes scale and therefore has social value. It also tries to establish a connection between gender role attitudes scale and the buying behaviour towards gender specific toys. However, the geographical scope of the research is limited to Mumbai city and covers only generation Alpha consumers.

10. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

1. The study focusses more on the aspect of Gender Neutrality of the toys.

2. The study considers all toys in general and does not make a difference in various categories of toys such as Educational Toys, Construction toys, Creative toys etc.

3. The study has a geographical limitation and covers Mumbai City only.

4. Due to the pandemic situation, face to face interviews with the buyers seems impossible. Due to this situation, the researcher will have to rely on remote data collection techniques.

5. The study is not experimental in nature and therefore, the outcomes of the study are based purely on the Reponses given by the buyers.

11. TENTATIVE CONCLUSION

- Safety and Age appropriateness have a maximum influence on the buying behaviour of all toys.
- Buyers who have a gender specific attitude towards toys do not prefer buying toys that are gender neutral.
- Advertisement and marketing content used by Indian toy manufacturers is highly gender specific.
- Individuals who have higher Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) scores tend to buy more gender specific toys.

12. **PROPOSED CHAPTER SCHEME:**

Sr. No	Chapter Title
1	Introduction
2	Conceptual Background
3	Literature review
4	Research methodology
5	Data analysis
6	Testing of hypothesis and model
7	Findings and Conclusions
8	Suggestions and Recommendations

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